

About This Lesson Plan on What Is My Cross? Lesson Plan

This lesson plan digs into [Matthew 16:21-27](#), keeping things relatable for teens. It's all about breaking down the idea of "taking up your cross." We're not going for the grand or fancy here – it's about making this concept practical.

The goal is to help teens get what it means to sacrifice for others. We're not talking about huge acts; think more about everyday stuff. And don't worry, this lesson can work with or without the Stations of the Cross.

This reflection would work well in conjunction with Stations of the Cross if time allows. If you've got time for the Stations, great – it'll add some extra meaning to this lesson plan. But if not, no sweat. We'll spend more time talking about the little crosses we deal with in our lives. These aren't always massive challenges; they're those day-to-day hiccups.

It's about showing teens how to wrap their heads around this idea of "taking up your cross." We're making it real, down-to-earth, and simple. So, whether it's the Stations or just chatting about life's hiccups, this lesson's here to help teens get a handle on what it means to care for others in their own unique way.

Beforehand, gather up some twigs and twine to make small crosses to take home as reminders of this discussion.

Opening Game for What Is My Cross?

Start this lesson plan on service by playing [Crossed Up Jam Up \(see the complete instructions\)](#).

Follow up with a couple of questions:

- Which command was the most difficult?
- Did you have a strategy for getting through the middle?

Sometimes we know where we need to go, but getting there is a challenge. And other people can get in our way.

Jesus knew he had to go to Jerusalem and he knew he would suffer there. Let's read more.

Scripture Reading for What Is My Cross? Lesson Plan

[Matthew 16:21-27](#) (Jesus talks about suffering) – the for the [22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A](#)

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Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.”

He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”

[Matthew 16:21-27](#)

Discussion for What Is My Cross?

Jesus was heading to Jerusalem, where he knew he would die. He did this willingly, out of love for us.

So, when Jesus talks about “taking up our cross and following Him,” it’s like he’s giving us a direction on the roadmap of life. He’s saying, “Hey, there’s something important here, let’s think about it.” Now, sometimes we get a bit tangled up in thinking that this “cross” stuff has to be huge, like a movie-worthy dramatic event. But, let’s get real – not all of us are facing those earth-shattering situations.

Think about it this way: We don’t always need to move to a new city or have someone we know pass away for it to be a “cross.” Those are big deals, no doubt, but not everyone goes through them. Our crosses can be these everyday moments that might not make the evening news, but they still matter.

Maybe it’s nailing that homework, even when Netflix is calling your name. Or switching gears when the gossip train starts chugging along. It’s even folding your socks when you’d rather toss them around like confetti. These little things, they’re like tiny crosses we carry around. It’s like doing the right thing when it’s kinda tempting to just do our own thing.

So, Jesus is saying, “Hey, it’s not just about the big stuff – it’s about doing the right thing, even if it’s not always the easiest thing.” It’s about showing that love and goodness can shine through in the small moments, not just the big ones. Got it?

Crosses can be little things also:

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- Doing our homework
- Changing the subject when someone starts gossiping
- Getting chores done without being asked
- Staying calm when siblings are being annoying
- Staying away from inappropriate thoughts and words online

All of these things are difficult. But we know they are the right things to do. Jesus has shown us that love often involves sacrifice. We must let go of what we want to do in order to do what is most loving. That is what he means when he talks about dying to self.

Reflection Questions for the What Is My Cross? Lesson Plan

- What are some everyday situations where you've had to choose between the easy way and the right way?
- Have you ever noticed that some of the smaller challenges in life can be more frustrating than the big ones? Why do you think that is?
- Think about a time when you've put someone else's needs before your own comfort. How did that feel afterward?
- Is there a specific "cross" that you find particularly tricky to carry? How might shifting your perspective help you deal with it?
- Imagine you're faced with a choice that involves a little sacrifice but a lot of love. How would you approach that decision?
- Have you ever seen someone else handling their own "cross" gracefully? What did you learn from their approach?
- How can we remind ourselves to see these everyday challenges as opportunities to show love and kindness?
- When someone else is struggling with their own "cross," what's a simple way we can offer support and encouragement?
- Do you think it's okay to stumble while carrying your "cross"? How might setbacks be part of the journey?
- Can you come up with a metaphor or analogy that captures the idea of "taking up your cross" in a way that makes sense to you?

Challenge for the What Is My Cross? Lesson Plan

Have each teen make a small cross by fastening two twigs together with twine.

Now, here's the plan: Take that cross home and put it somewhere that'll catch your eye. It's not just a piece of DIY art; it's a reminder – a nudge to think about something pretty important. You know those moments when you've got to choose between what's easy and what's right? Those are your crosses.

So, when you're stuck between a rock and a hard place, when you're looking at something that's a bit of a struggle but also a chance to do some good, that little twig cross is your ally. It's

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your visual cue to think about taking up your cross willingly, not grumbling about it, but with a sprinkle of love.

Think about it as a secret signal, a code that reminds you to make choices that show kindness and caring. It's like having a tiny advisor whispering, "Hey, you've got this – take up that cross!" So, give those twigs a purpose beyond being twigs, and let them be your daily prompt to be your best, loving self. Got it?

Prayer for the What Is My Cross? Lesson Plan

If time allows, pray the [Stations of the Cross](#). It's like this journey through pivotal moments in Jesus' life, each stop offering a chance to reflect and connect.

Otherwise, conclude by praying [the Suscipe \(Take Lord Receive\) prayer](#). This prayer, also known as "Take Lord, Receive," is like a heartfelt conversation with our Lord.

It's about surrendering, opening up, and saying, "Hey, I'm all ears. Show me the way." You know, like inviting some divine guidance into your journey. It's a way of saying, "I'm ready to embrace those crosses, to walk the path of love and selflessness." It's a fitting conclusion, wrapping the lesson up in a moment of introspection and connection.

Whether it's Stations or Suscipe, it's all about ending on a reflective note.

Resources

[Learn about the connection between the Jewish Passover meal, the Eucharist, and the cross](#)

[Get a set of meditations on the cross](#)

[More Themes](#)

[Background Material](#)

[Music Suggestions](#)

[More Youth Ministry Lesson Plans and Reflections](#)